



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MDA Reminds Farmers of Spring Fertilizer Rules for Small Grains and Cover Crops

*Top Dressing of Small Grains Allowed beginning February 15; Manure Applications Prohibited Until
March 1*

ANNAPOLIS, MD (February 6, 2013) – The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) today reminded farmers growing small grains to be mindful of new requirements regarding the use of fertilizer and manure outlined in Maryland's recently revised nutrient management regulations.

Farmers planting small grain crops, such as wheat, rye or barley, for harvest are allowed under the new regulations to "top dress" these small grains with commercial fertilizer as early as February 15. Maryland's nutrient management regulations restrict manure applications until March 1.

"Science and crop conditions indicate that these small grains have absorbed the nutrients left in the soil last fall, and farmers now must provide additional nutrients to keep them growing," said Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance. "The mild winter has surpassed the 1200 Growing Degree Days required prior to spring application in the new regulations."

Farmers with harvestable small grain acres enrolled in MDA's Cover Crop Program may not receive any nutrient applications until March 1. Manure applications on all harvestable small grains are not required to be incorporated since these acres are considered an existing or established crop. All farmers are advised to continue to consult their nutrient management plans. MDA suggests that the commercial fertilizer applied include a denitrification inhibitor to reduce the risk of nitrogen loss.

For additional information on MDA Cover Crop Program provisions, farmers should contact their local soil conservation district or the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program at [410-841-5864](tel:410-841-5864). Questions about the application of fertilizers should be directed to the Nutrient Management Program at [410-841-5959](tel:410-841-5959).

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